BTP-0054/687 (SH)

Another old woman had been ill for four years with rheumatism so that she could barely move from her sleeping place, when some supernatural being came to her. She heard a voice saying,

"Get up! Mortal," and an invisible hand grasped her hair and led her four times around in a circle, sunwise. As usual a ~~time~~ tune and songs were vouchsafed to this woman, though ~~what~~ these ~~were~~ have now been forgotten.

One ~~of my~~ informants, a woman now past middle age, was once returning to Bella Coola from Rivers Inlet when she was taken violently ill with a stomach ache. That night as she slept uneasily on the shore she heard a voice singing. Listening attentively, she learnt the words and tunes of two songs, and heard the voice say;

"Your name is Älpälx̂ălosâix."

Unquestionably the visitor was Tlitcäplilän'a, and if she had appeared, and sung ~~four songs, my informant~~ the woman had ~~given my informant~~, ~~she~~ would have become a shaman. Unfortunately, this boon was not granted to her, ~~so~~ she received nothing more than ~~a barren~~ the name, ~~meaning,~~ "Power to use."

What is the explanation of the songs which shamans believe they hear? In this case for example, a reliable woman asserted that she had heard two songs, though she had since forgotten them as they had no social significance, because she had not become a shaman. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Bella Coola shaman songs are of a simple type, with few words, and with tunes of no great difficulty, all closely akin to one pattern. Hence they are songs which could easily be invented by anyone. ~~Further, every Bella Coola is convinced of the possibility of receiving such songs, and it is not difficult for him to imagine them when in a peculiar mental state caused by illness. Again,~~ both by others and by himself, to have A person who recovers from a severe illness is expected, ~~to have~~ had such an experience, consequently it is easy for him to interpret the confused thoughts of a sickness ~~with~~ as a visitation from a supernatural being.

(part of 1102A) With regard to the songs ~~A Bella Coola shaman who died about twenty years ago received his power in~~ the following manner:- He had been spearing coho salmon in the Bella Coola River one autumn when one of them crumbled to skin in his hands as he removed it from his spear. From this, some mysterious malady entered his body. No one could cure him and by December he had wasted away to a walking skeleton. Then, one morning he heard

A certain man had a similar experience, when he too heard Tłitcaplilan a without actually seeing her. He was in a canoe at the time, near the point between North Bentinck Arm and Labouchere Channel and distinctly heard her whistle, accompanied by four beats on a drum. This may have been an omen, as his sister died soon afterwards. Occasionally, Tłitcaplilan a appears in dreams and gives information, as she did to this man's mother, instructing her to brush her body with spruce boughs to avoid small-pox. She followed this advice and both she and her husband escaped unscathed from the epidemic.

A shaman who died about twenty years ago received his power in the following manner. He had been spearing Cohoe Salmon in the Bella Coola River one autumn when one of the fish crumbled to skin in his hands as he removed it from the water. From this event some mysterious malady entered his body; no one could cure him, and by December he had wasted away to a walking skeleton. Then, one morning, he heard whistling which he was sure must be the voice of Tłitcaplilan a. He wisely said nothing about it, nor was it heard by anyone else. The same sound was repeated on the next two mornings, and on the fourth the woman appeared.

"I am Anolx m imut," she said. "Everyone calls on me to visit the sick, and henceforth they will likewise seek you and your basin."

Something entered his stomach, causing it to heave violently, and he felt that the sickness had left him. He sent for the singers and repeated to them the words which Tłitcaplilan a had chanted; these formed the text of the shaman's song which he used on future occasions. While giving them to the singers, he endeavoured to dance, but was too feeble to do more than weakly shake his hands. From that time on, Anolx m imut was able to cure the sick.

This last account is typical. Tłitcaplilan a appears, inserts "power" into the body of the patient to cure him, sings one or more songs, gives the sufferer a name, and then vanishes. If the curing power thus bestowed remains within the person benefitted; it is this which enables him to heal others if Tłitcaplilan a has so decided. In such cases, there is mention of a "basin" in the song, and the one who has just recovered will be able to treat others, especially those suffering from the same malady as himself. The reference to a basin is because such uten-

sils are used during treatments. To the Bella Coola a shaman is one who has had such an experience and has publicly claimed it, whether or not he can cure the sick.

T̓itcapli̓an a is known by many names, in accordance with her ability to treat many diseases, and the designation she bestows depends upon the malady cured. The following are some of the names received from her by shamans.

S xs xqwalx laoslaix, "The Strengthener of the Breath." This name was given to a person who was cured when he found breathing very difficult. The text of his song was:

"T̓itcapli̓an a gave me (the name) S xs xqwalx laoslaix with a small object to aid the breathing of the very sick."

Tamtamslo psta. This has the same significance as the last.

Anolx m imut, "The Dancer who makes Noise only with his Body." A shaman with this name does not use a rattle when curing.

Anux ln mut, "Quivering to and fro." This refers to the movements of a shaman when he dances for curative purposes.

Qpanpan̓iktn mlaix, "The Revolver." This is derived from qpan̓iktn m, to revolve sunwise, and as this is done for curative purposes, the name really signifies, "The One who Restores to Strength."

It is believed that T̓itcapli̓an a often uses her own discretion about visiting the sick, but that sometimes a number of the supernatural beings confer as to whether an ailing person should be helped, and if so request her to visit him. Sometimes the patient is so sick that an enormous amount of power must be inserted to help him, and he dies from its receipt. In such cases he is revived by Anunits ktn m, a male being whose sole function is to restore those whom T̓itcapli̓an a has slain. This return to life has frequently occurred when relatives have been mourning the death of the patient, who is presently able to recount all that he has seen. Sometimes T̓itcapli̓an a, instead of herself bestowing power upon a sick person, carries him[1] away to a locality in which a supernatural being was petrified in the beginning of time.

(1). The Bella Coola do not theorize as to the part of the person thus transported; if questioned, they conclude that it must be either the spirit or the life.

Although it is Tłitcapliłan a who most frequently cures a sick person, there are many instances of other supernatural beings having done so. Little seems to be known of thsee, except that they have been recorded as appearing to give a patient their name and and to cure him of his malady. So far as could be ascertained, they are thought of only in connection with apparitions to the sick and, since in function they exactly resemble Tłitcapliłan a, and as it is she who is most commonly spoken of, it is possible that these are actually the same being under mother names. The following male beings are of this type.

Ninits mlaix, "The Restorer." He is able to cure the sick even when at the point of death.

Anuski kn m, "The Saviour." He can rescue persons who who have been injured by other supernatural beings.

Nonotsn mxmem, "The One who is Thought Of." Having powerful curing abilities, people think of him when ill.

Anota akmots, "The Open-Mouthed One." His mouth is always open to suck forth sickness.

Nusłkakstamidjut, "He whose Basin in in his own Body." A person who receives the ability to cure from this being does not use the customary basin.

S siutł. It is said that many Rivers Inlet shamans have received their powers from this creature, which is accordingly well known to the Bella Coola in this connection although none of their own people are said to have been benefitted by it.

Since all animals are supernatural, it follows that any of them can cure the sick. Instances are remembered of this, in which the patient received a name differing slightly from that of his animal benefactor. Salmon, especially Cohoes and early Spring Salmon, are especially potent curers and many sick people have received aid from them. It is recognised that the former are uncanny since they have the ability to hide themselves in insignificant streams. One man was cured by a tree which gave him a yodel-like shaman's song, imitating the creaking and waving of its branches. More often, however, a supernatural animal merely speaks to a man without making him a shaman.

Two courses are open to the patient who has been cured by such a visitation. He may at once proclaim his powers, or he may say nothing about them in the hope of obtaining further revelations and further names. From a single experience he has received a certain amount of power, but the more he has, the greater this

will be. If he decides not to wait for further powers he at once calls the singers, and repeats to them the words and tunes of the songs he has received. When later on he gives presents to validate his shamanistic name, it becomes publicly recognised that he is a shaman, and his future success depends on his success in curing those who appeal to him. If the man decides not to make use of his experience, ~~in the hope of receiving further visitations~~, he must not mention the name as his apparition, to do so would not only prevent further benefits, but would cause the return of the disease from which he had been suffering. Some shamans have waited until they have received three or four separate visitations, acquiring a name at each; and one Bella Bella shaman was known to have had ten. Whether or not it is wise at once to display shaman's power is a matter on which there is no general agreement. On the one hand by long, and perhaps fruitless, waiting a man postpones the social esteem which would have been his if he had at once displayed his prowess, gambling ~~against~~ with his chances of receiving still greater powers. While waiting for further visitations, a man may be able to make use of the powers he has already received, although he cannot do so formally as an accredited shaman. Thus my informant, who long ago was visited by a supernatural being, but has made no public claim of his apparition, ~~is able to cure stomach-ache among his own grandchildren by massaging the stomach as if to force something from it, and then puffing this something, four times, from his spread hands. Still hoping for power, he declined to say from which supernatural being he had received his power.~~ is able to cure stomach-ache among his own grandchildren by massaging the stomach as if to force something from it, and then puffing this something, four times, from his spread hands. Still hoping for power, he declined to say by which supernatural being he had been visited.

The following account was obtained from one of the few old Bella Coola Indians ~~one of the few~~ who claim to have had shamanistic experiences. It describes what is done when the patient decides not to wait for further revelations.

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future use. ~~My informant~~ The man is firmly convinced that if his mother had not thus called in the singers so speedily he would, after four days, have received another vision, and with it real shamanistic power. As it is, he is ~~known as~~ a shaman, since he was cured when at the point of death ~~and~~ by Tlitcaplilan'a and received a name and song from her, but he is unable himself to effect cures. As soon as the singers had departed, his mother at once began to make for him a collar formed of alternate bands of dyed, and undyed, cedar-bark. This is the distinctive decoration worn constantly by a shaman for a certain period after receiving his powers, ~~and~~ at all times when dancing. Within a few days all the inhabitants of the village were called in and my informant's family distributed presents, thus validating his shamanistic name. Such presents are not returnable; "they have become nothing" for the name. Thus accredited, a shaman is in a position to start curing if his song has contained a reference to a basin, otherwise, as in the case of my informant, he is merely a shaman in a social, ~~but~~ penal, not professionally. There is thought to be some peculiar power actually within the new shaman's body, which is too potent for him to mix with others. Accordingly he wears the distinctive collar, which serves as a warning for menstruating women and others who are unclean to remain at a distance, and he spends much of his time alone in the forest. This continues until the next kusiut dance season when the coming to him of a ye·x (1) frees him from restraint, since the ~~It appears as if~~ one supernatural power ~~could drive~~ drives out ~~the~~ the other. If the shaman himself is unwilling to have a ye·x, it is sufficient if one comes to a son, or other near relative.

A shaman who has been told by his supernatural visitant to use a basin instructs a carpenter to make ~~this~~ one for him. The design ~~is~~ either depends on the shaman's own wish, or ~~if~~ on that of the latter his visitant has decreed any design, it is that which he uses.

How does a shaman function professionally?

When a person is ill one of his relatives comes to request the shaman to cure him. "I will help the mortal," answers the shaman, as though he were himself a supernatural being. Indeed he considers himself to be removed from the ranks of ordinary mortals, and refers to the being from whom he has received his power as "comrade." No mention of recompense is made, but the shaman understands that if he

(1) See page

succeeds he will be rewarded. Donning his collar of alternate rows of dyed and undyed ~~cedar~~ bark, he proceeds to the patient's house, usually followed by some of the singers, as well as by anyone else who is interested. The shaman throws himself down beside, or on, the patient and begins to feel for the sickness. Particularly in the case of stomach or chest trouble this is a difficult matter. The practitioner kneads the flesh, pounds the patient, leaps on him, and pummels him until a spectator wonders that the sufferer survives. The aim throughout is to bring the sickness, ~~conceived of~~ pictured as ~~xxxxkxx~~ having material form, towards the surface whence it can be ~~brought forth~~ extracted. There are several ways of doing this, ~~dependent on varying Bella Coolla beliefs regarding sickness~~, though in all cases ~~this held to be due to the~~ the sickness is thought to be due to ~~either~~ intrusion of some foreign substance into the patient's body, ~~or to his soul having departed~~.

2. In a simple illness ~~the~~ the shaman is able to cure by his power alone. After locating the seat of the ~~sickness~~ disease he casts himself on the patient, with head pressed close to the spot where he has located the trouble, and growls and grunts with half-closed lips, ejecting a flow of saliva over the patient. By so doing he inserts his own power into the patient, who at once begins to initate the ferociuos chattering of the shaman and shakes ~~his~~ his hands. Then the shaman proceeds to recall this power to himself by scooping it up with half-cupped hands. Endowed as he is, the sickness is harmless to him. No instance is known of a shaman having failed to recall his power but, theoretically, if he did not do so he would cease to be a shaman, and the ability would pass to the cured person.

1. ~~Xx~~ Some shamans of long ago were the possessors of life-sticks and could cure merely by touching the patient with the life-giving end. ~~of their stick.~~ their one of these.

3. In more difficult cases the shaman uses his basin and seeks assistance from others in ~~using the~~ ~~tga~~ frenzied beating of sticks. He sends some young man out to fill the basin at the river, ~~and~~ sets it near the ~~h~~ patient, and throws water over him as he kneads in the manner already described. While this is going on, and it is often a lengthy performance, another shaman or someone ~~xxxxxxx~~ accustomed to lead the singers, ranges the by-standers into two rows, facing each other between the door and the central fire. Each is provided with a beating stick such as the singers

use and a sounding-board is placed before each row. The clever dancer who has been 4
commissioned to lead the orchestra of stick beaters stands near the door and the musicians take their time from his movements. First he ~~gently~~ slowly raises both arms and all beat time softly, then as he raises his arms higher the noise increases, and he sways from side to side as if carried away by the music; ~~and~~ as he does so the men towards whom he leans intensify their beating while those on the other side decrease. Back and forth he sways followed by the beating; ~~and as he prepares for~~ nearing the climax he treads mincingly, whereat the noise rises to thunder-pitch; then jumps twice, and as he strikes the ground the drums beat and all the sticks come down with a final ear-splitting crash. Throughout the whole the women drone "i·····". This elaborate beating of time is repeated four times, on each occasion concluding with the double jump which calls forth the double thunder of drums and sticks.